5 Minutes with LearnPlatform

On today's episode, we're joined by a former teacher and administrator in the US and overseas, who is now the Co-Founder and CEO of LearnPlatform, Karl Rectanus. Karl shared about LearnPlatform's commitment to expanding equitable engagement for all students to the teaching and tools that work best for them. He also highlighted a new research-backed infographic they recently released, which outlines digital equity gaps that have affected students across the United States in the past year.

Mentioned Resources:
Infographic:
https://learnplatform.com/insights/infographic/2020-digital-equity-in-review?utm_source=social&utm_medium=infographic&utm_campaign=2021&utm_content=ktr

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Transcript of the podcast episode:
Gabrielle Oates: Well hello everybody, we are happy to share another podcast episode today and i'm happy to welcome Karl Rectanus here, who is a former teacher and administrator in the US, as well as overseas. He's now the current Co Founder and CEO of LearnPlatform. So in this five minutes I would love, if you could just first share with people a bit about what LearnPlatform does, and some of your recent work.

Karl Rectanus: Yeah thanks and big fans of Educating All Learners, because it's part of our mission. LearnPlatform is a research driven for-benefit organization that provides an EdTech effectiveness system to districts and states across the country. Districts and states use our systems to continuously improve the safety, equity, costs and effectiveness of their EdTech ecosystem. Most recently we just released a trends report based on billions of data points across schools and districts in the US, of the EdTech digital learning equity gaps in the US. And we released that infographic for public consumption to really help people understand what's actually happening here, especially post COVID.

Gabrielle Oates: And we know that infographic is now available for everybody, and before we kind of address some of the findings from the graphic, who was it initially made for?

Karl Rectanus: Yeah, this is really for anyone who wants to improve education equity. Especially decision makers, whether they're teachers and administrators, policymakers at the local state or federal level, parents - i'm a parent of three and i'm making decisions on behalf of my students, my children, EdTech product providers - anybody who really cares about improving education equity.

Gabrielle Oates: Like I mentioned, I wanted to touch on a bit of the findings, so what were some of those from the infographic that really stood out to you?

Karl Rectanus: Okay so many! I'll just highlight two or three. One - when when we talked to district administrators or educators, often they'll say if you ask them how many EdTech tools they think they're using across the district they'll say between 100 and 200. The data showed that post COVID, that number is closer to 1400 in every school district. That's the number of different EdTech tools being used by students and teachers every month in every district. That's amazing and creates both challenges and opportunities. So just as a baseline of what's going on. One of the other things that we looked at was the trends of student engagement. On a daily basis, we have an index that allows us to understand what that looks like across millions of students, how they're engaging with thousands of different EdTech tools and we slice that in that data to look at the differences in engagement between students and districts with less than 25% free and reduced lunch. Those are traditionally more affluent districts versus all other districts; that's districts with more than 25% free and reduced lunch. There is a definite digital equity learning gap that occurred almost immediately last March, when schools closed, expanded, and you can see how that changed over time, but it is continuous, it's persistent this Fall.

Gabrielle Oates: Absolutely and at we're EALA we're going to be sharing more content around data collection: what are some important pieces of data to collect and how it can inform those decisions. So we're happy to share LearnPlatform's resources. Where can people go to check out the infographic and LearnPlatform?

Karl Rectanus: LearnPlatform.com - it's all one word. You'll see right there, we do have sections for things like insights. That's where this infographic will be. That's right on the front page. There's also free resources for educators, districts, states, research based rubrics and tools, so feel free to go to LearnPlatform.com to learn more.

Gabrielle Oates: Right, thank you.

Karl Rectanus: Thank you.

Gabrielle Oates: To learn more about Educating All Learners Alliance go to educatingalllearners.org, subscribe to our YouTube channel, and follow us on Twitter @educateall_org. Until next time, this is the Educating All Learners Alliance podcast!